

## About Comparative Research of Poems “Treasury of Mysteries” and “Iskandername” on the Basis of Manuscript Sources as the Multiculturalism Samples

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### ABSTRACT

In this scientific paper for the first time were investigated the innovative approach of the local literary heritage of Ganja on the basis of various historic sources as manuscripts and archive materials. Have been researched the comparative materials of such poems as “Treasury of mysteries” and “Iskandername”. Also were systematic investigated the importance of these poems of great poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi in research of historical past of Azerbaijan. In academic paper based on such sources as manuscripts have been researched problems on investigation of basic characteristics of cultural heritage of the ancient East, also some features of formation and historical development of legal culture in society from the point of ethnographic-literary point of view. For the first time by author were researched the problem of similar socio-cultural features in these poems on the real samples from the different manuscripts and archive sources. Dialogue culture between Eastern and Western civilizations and multiculturalism values were investigated on the basis of comparative study of these literary samples. Have been proved, that Nizami Ganjavi told about the importance of protection of dialogue culture between nations as the main element of the peace.

### KEYWORDS

Ganja; ethnography, Azerbaijan, literature, ancient national traditions, manuscripts, archive documents, multiculturalism

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## Introduction

The genius poet and philosopher later known as Nizami Ganjavi (1491, 1543a, 1543b, 1648, 1947), whose works would profoundly impact the literary school through awakening the spirits and thoughts of mankind for centuries, was born. Nizami Ganjavi long ago became more than a descendant of Azerbaijan. His timeless verses rank among the most valuable wealth of mankind, while he himself reached the pantheon of history's most exalted descendants. While alive, Nizami Ganjavi was confident of the eternity of his works, writhing the following:

When asked a century later where is it?  
Each couplet would call out: “Here I am”.

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Not one, but eight, centuries have elapsed since then, yet the vitality of Nizami reaches beyond the temporal borders of his clairvoyance, leading the way to eternity. A genius German poet emphasized the value of high modesty by pointing to seven great poets (Ferdowsi, Anvari, Nizami, Sadi, Rumi, Hafez, Jami) distinguished within Persian-language poetry: “Even though the East has given the biggest advantage to only 7 of its poets, there are a lot of poets superior to me among the rest of the preferred ones” (Bodenstedt, 1872).

## **Theoretical basis of the Research**

### ***Innovative approach to the research of heritage of Nizami Ganjavi***

Nizami's name was Ilyas. However, certain sources claim that his name was Ahmad (for example, the source entitled “Khulasat al-afkar” notes his name as Ahmad ibn Yusif Muayyad). Nizami is a nickname of the poet. His pseudonym was Nizam ad-din. In the medieval Moslem East there was a tradition of indicating kunya, the son's name, along with the name of famous persons. The kunya of Nizami is Mohammad. In his various hemistiches the poet speaks to his son Mohammad through admonishing him.

From his first poem to his last, Nizami repeatedly brings the name of Ganja to his hemistiches. And one of these couplets is an excellent riposte to those trying forcibly to extricate Nizami from Ganja and artificially connect him to other places. Seemingly responding to all these a few centuries in advance, he states his permanent belonging to Ganja:

My secrets-my words coming from my spirit are made obvious,

Though he is taken to Boukhara, his origin from Ganja.

Certain sources (for instance, Dovlatshah Samargandi, the 15th century) inform about Nizami's brother Givami Mutarrizi. The literary relics written by Givami Mutarrizi that we possess today attest to his high skills in the genre of qasida-masnavi, as well as his overall poetic talent and savy poetic technique. However, we lack definitive scientific evidence regarding the native brotherhood links between Mutarrizi and Nizami (Nizami, 2004a,b).

### ***Academic problems of investigation of “Khamsa” on the basis of new archive materials***

Meanwhile it is hardly accidental that we mentioned this contentious couplet relating to the place of birth of Nizami. Throughout history, along with those seeking to claim ownership of many Azerbaijani values and territories, there have also been people attempting to appropriate the genius descendants of Azerbaijan, and such attempts are happening to this day. During Nizami's era, two languages – Arabic and Persian – dominated science and literature in the near and Middle East. All scientific works were written in Arabic, while poets from a diverse range of nationalities in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Iran and India crafted their literary heritage in a single language - Persian. With clear command and knowledge of information in the most varied fields of science reflected in his works, Nizami demonstrates that he is a highly-educated person. His earliest known verses indicate his high poetical techniques. And this is evidence of Nizami's engagement in poetry not as an amateur but as a genuine professional, someone who perfectly mastered the theoretical basis of this art from the very beginning. The canons of that age necessitated, first of all, perfect command of Persian and Arabic in order to



master such a wide range of universal knowledge (Herzfeld, 1941; Əhmədov, 2007; Babayev, 1999; Artamonov, 1974; Gazhieva, 2015; Məmmədova, 2012).

Nizami wrote his seminal works “Divan” and “Khamsa” in Persian. Referring to the observations of the prominent Iranian scholar Saeed Nafisi, in spite of his fluency in and perfection of Persian, Nizami does not belong to ethnic Persian Nizami’s verses. Moreover, in several instances, to specify the precise meaning of Persian words Nizami appeals directly to the explanatory glossaries of the Persian language:

The catapults have two types with reference to the glossaries –  
One throws silk, other one throws the stone.

### ***Comparisons between poems of the as the historical-literary source “Treasury of mysteries” and “Iskandername”***

Nizami was made Nizami as such by his “Khamsa”, composed of 5 masnavis-poems which enshrined him in literature. “The Treasury of Mysteries” (“Makhzan ul-Asrar”) written in 1178, “Khosrow and Shirin” written 1180, “Leyli and Majnun” dedicated to love story and completed in 1192, “Seven Beauties” (“Haft paykar”) written in 1197 and “Iskandername” consisting of two parts – “Iqbal-name” and “Sharaf-name”, completed in 1202. In fact Nizami combined these five works under a single title. Had Nizami lived longer he probably would have written several more poems, upping his body of work to 7,8 or 9 poems. Nevertheless, his lifespan coincided with the time required to craft these five works, and the theorists who noticed the organic linkage of these five works, as well as the wholeness of the conception (which started in “Treasure of Mysteries”) in “Iskandername”, initially combined these five works under the title “Panj ganj” – “Five treasures”. Subsequently, these two words were replaced by the more compact Arabic word “Khamsa”, meaning “quintet”.

## **TREASURY OF MYSTERIES**

### **The Story of Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman**

A poor old woman, harassed and in pain  
Came to Sanjar the Sultan to complain:  
She said: “You have no justice, you offend,  
Your club-law and your cruelty have no end.  
Your drunken steward came to me, the lout,  
Kicked, knocked me down, till he was tired out.  
He seized me by the hair – an innocent old crone,  
And dragged me, heeding neither cry nor moan.  
A crowd flocked round, he swore at me, the brute,  
Abused, reviled me, hard blows following suit.  
He yelled: “You hunch-backed hag, you’d better tell  
Who killed a man quite near to where you dwell?  
He searched my house in hope of finding there  
The murderer... O master, is that fair? (Nizami, 1539-1543).

**Or:**

## ISKANDERNAME

### Fragments from the arrival of Iskander in Barda and his Encounter with the Queen Nushaba

Oh, wine-bearer, bring me a cup of your exquisite wine,  
It is for the thirsty spring giving water divine.  
I feel all aflame and my thirst rouses terrible pain,  
O brings me some wine; let me drink till no remnants remain.  
Barda!..what a beautiful country! A wonderful sight:  
In spring and winter the flowers are fragrant and bright,  
In summer the tulips and poppies with scarlet tints glow,  
In winter the breezes of spring-tide caressingly blow.  
A garden as lovely as this one is not to be found,  
Nor also a land likes Barda, where these riches abound.  
An eminent narrator tells us a wonderful lay,  
A lay that in eloquent wording survives this day:  
The fair Nushaba reigned here – queen of this land superfine,  
A patron of feats rich in delicate sweetmeats and wine.  
This female jeyran would have none of the masculine race,  
And rivaled the gorgeous pheasant in beauty and grace.  
An eloquent talker, unyielding, and wise and sincere,

In figure of a goddess, with temper of kindness and cheer (Nizami, 1543a).

The ideals which Nizami propagated eight centuries ago remain desirable today. Humanity is presently fighting for domination of the features Nizami wished to see human beings and society. The city Nizami depicts in his final poem – in “Iqbal-name” part of “Iskandername” actually was the society he dreamt of and wished to see implemented. Along with other world genius who served a kind of global school, Nizami has clear stake in the overall progress attained by mankind from Nizami’s time until now.

### Methodology

#### *Life and activity of Nizami Ganjavi as the important source in investigation of academic problems*

Sources mention different dates for Nizami’s death: 1180 (Dowlatshahi, Haji Khalifa, Hammer Purgshtal, F.Erdman), 1199, 1200 (“Atashkada”, “Tarihe-jahanara”, G.Auzly), 1202-1203 (V.Baher, E.Brown, C.Ryeau) and so on. Nevertheless, a commonly accepted date is March 12, 1209 (in 1947 it was written on the stone over Nizami’s grave as follows: 4 Ramazan 605 Hijri).

Due to his being not only a poet but also a formidable scholar standing one degree higher than other scholars of his period, Nizami was deemed a “physician” – owner of wisdom. Even though the indicated period abounded with geniuses, only two others in addition to Nizami were honoured with this title: Ibn Sina and Omar Khayyam.



As was noted, in his poems Nizami passionately speaks of his son Mohammad, born in 1174. It is unknown who Mohammad's descendants were and whether he had grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Nonetheless, other descendants of Nizami – the fruits of his pen – have remained as crisp and alive as they were eight centuries ago. The profound power of the word is captured here. In the following couplet, Nizami admonishes his son Mohammad:

I notice in You the desire of being superior  
 I observe in You the habits of poetry.  
 Nevertheless, do not hold on the art or poetry  
 As the nicest of it is the one lying most of all.  
 Do not seek for fame in this art (poetry)  
 As this art comes to the end with Nizami.  
 Though the verse is higher for its position  
 You had better be engaged in definite useful science.

Certainly, the wise Nizami was well aware that the beginning of verse did not relate to him and it would not end with him either. So why did he deter his son with obvious poetry signs from this way? As a consummate professional, he wished to see his son as a poet of at least Nizami's caliber. Meanwhile, he probably realized that being Nizami is a miracle which would not fall to the lot of everybody. Therefore, he exhorted his son, who would not be a stronger poet than he, to take up clearly required area of science (Nizami, 1539-1543).

As Nizami proposed the related formula:

Good pack-saddle making  
 Is better than bad hatting.

### ***Importance of historical sources and documents in research of comparative parts of poems***

Shortly thereafter, in the XIII century, the initial chain of responses to these five poems were born. In India, Amir Khosrow laid the foundation for the Nizami school by creating the first quintet in response to Nizami's poems. That is to say, through creating the response "Khamasa", Amir Khosrow also defined the formula of responding to Nizami: plot, characters and basic principles should be preserved; the responder should manifest his skills in mode of expression, artistic style and word polishing. Even though the doors of all palaces were open to Nizami during his lifetime, he remained outside the palaces. He preferred his calm and free life to everything. Nonetheless, his own door was open to everyone, and he invited everyone to step inside and benefit. As a matter of fact, the invitation Nizami made 8 centuries ago is in effect nowadays as well, the benefits of opening the door available to all:

Do not shut my door to anybody,  
 As it not good behavior to shut the door to someone.  
 As the word named us "ocean",  
 Our door should be open like the ocean.  
 Enable the seekers to come,  
 And see the door of the King of poets.

Though time destroys even the most magnificent royal palaces, the word “palace” for Nizami gets more fresh, shining and attractive instead of atrophying, defying the logic of time as it increases its age. Probably, the initial reason for this is encapsulated in Nizami’s verse created in the name of humanity and respect and love for mankind.

The person hewing the human sculpture from stone  
Can but only wonder at human beings!

He says these words as if to himself. As Nizami constantly marveled at human beings and worshiped mankind’s defining traits, he could have hewed eternal human sculptures from the word.

If you are human then mix up with the people,  
As the human suits the human, the human fits the human.

This idea-principle of humanism makes up the nucleus of Nizami’s literary work. Nizami sets forth this supreme idea from his first verse up to his last one, and from his first poem to his final one. Regarding readability, Nizami is one of the most complicated authors of the medieval period. It hardly stands to reason that Nizami’s language is difficult to understand. Despite the fact that Nizami crafted his literary heritage eight centuries ago, his language is little different from contemporary Persian, except for a number of archaic words. Comprehending Nizami is complicated by his intricate work on each hemistich and couplet, as well as his propensity for expressing multiple meanings of words in each hemistich and couplet, imbuing each line with several layers of meaning. Therefore, one cannot simply skim through Nizami. Each hemistich and couplet, as well as every word and phrase in each line, must be read repeatedly, in order to discover new semantic layers and comprehend the general sense of the fragment in line with the discovered meanings.

The unprecedented ability of expressing the word with magisterial power is not only something which makes Nizami a world-class poet. It is just one the terms which ensure the genius of Nizami. Nizami was a broadly read person. He had not limited himself with solely Turkic, Arabic and Persian sources. As he noted he was aware of diverse Christian and Jewish sources. Knowing several languages enabled him directly to read those books.

**Samples:**

### TREASURY OF MYSTERIES

#### The Story of Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman

O mighty Shah! I writhe with dreadful pain,  
To God you’ll answer should my cries be vain.  
You have no mercy; you’re unjust, unfair,  
Your club-law is a torture, hard to bear.  
A shah should grant his people bounty, grace,  
Whilst you defile your honor with disgrace.  
To rob poor orphans – that’s no valiant deed,  
I see the sequel to your acts, indeed! (Nizami, 1539-1543).

**Or:**



## ISKANDERNAME

### *Fragments from the arrival of Iskander in Barda and his Encounter with the Queen Nushaba*

A bevy of comely young maidens surrounded the Queen,  
 They stood in a round and created a picturesque scene  
 Besides them, the Queen had trick-riders and many a knight,  
 Great numbers of warriors presented a marvelous sight.  
 Although they were men in attendance, the prop of her reign,  
 Yet none of them ever set foot in her private domain.  
 The kingdom was governed by women with masterly skill,  
 To men she would never in person give word of her will.  
 Men housed in the outskirts, ne'er settled to live near their Queen,  
 And chose for their homesteads vast meadows, delightfully green.  
 In fear of her wrath none would venture to enter the town,  
 They loved Nushaba for they knew of her wondrous renown.  
 Whenever she ordered to corves the men would forsake  
 Their homesteads to labor, all ready to die for her sake.  
 When King Iskander with his legions appeared in the land,  
 The tents of her war camps were countless, her army well manned

(Nizami, 1543b).

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In this scientific paper on the basis of academic materials, manuscripts samples and archive sources has been determined:

a) Nizami was born in Ganja, a renaissance city, and he was among those who founded and immortalized the Oriental Renaissance through his personality and work (Nizami, 1491).

b) This famous thinker described the actual problems as gender equality in poems of "Treasury of mysteries" and "Iskandername. This innovative scientific argument was proved on the basis of literary samples from these works.

c) Have been researched the problem of study of traditions of public (state) administration based on the comparison of historical facts from such literary parts from poems as "Arrival of Iskander in Barda and his encounter with the Queen Nushaba" and "The Story of Sultan Sanjar and the Old Woman".

d) Dialogue culture between Eastern and Western civilizations and multiculturalism values were investigated on the basis of comparative study of these literary samples. Have been proved, that Nizami Ganjavi told about the importance of protection of dialogue culture between nations as the main element of the peace.

e) Nizami was a genius who projected his humanism beyond national borders, as clearly evidenced by his choice of main characters of his masnavis. His hero can be Persian, Arabian and Greek. The aim of Nizami is not captured by the nationality of the hero or character. The purpose is to find the supreme literary solution of the idea. However, neither the choice of main characters nor



the representation of dozens of nationalities throughout his poems is unintended. Nizami does so intentionally. Thus he once more demonstrates that he writes about and for human beings, and that the readers of his works should be not one nation but many nations. And consequently it happened exactly that way. Nizami is one of the most widely-translated classics in the world. What's more, ever newer languages will join the ranks of these languages. Through his works Nizami not only founded a literary pattern to be repeated over centuries, but also the pattern for building ideas, nations, morality and states.

f) Nizami Ganjavi, a person embodying the wishes of everyone, belongs to all. He is eternal because he belongs to everyone. Nizami will always be one step ahead of us, navigating towards a serene future.

Today, many locations and monuments have been named and dedicated to the great Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi – in Azerbaijan's capital, Baku; in his hometown of Ganja; and all over the world, in major cities such as Moscow, St Petersburg, Derbent, Cheboksary, Beijing, Acapulco, Kishinev, Luxembourg and Rome. Institutions, streets, squares and metro stations have all been named in his honour.

### Disclosure statement

The author does not have any potential conflicts of interest to disclose.

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